| | **Monaghan Collegiate School**<br>**Distance Learning Policy** |
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We have devised a new Distance Learning Policy to reflect the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19 and the significant increase in the use of technology to continue learning. This policy does not introduce any new concepts, rather, it specifically outlines the various applications used for the delivery of online classes remotely.

**Introduction**
The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and information to students, their parents, and staff, surrounding the use of technology when learning remotely i.e. from a place other than school and where it is not possible for the teacher to deliver the class within the same location, as would be the case, if the class was taking place in a classroom setting.

While this policy informs best practice for remote learning and the use of online technologies during normal school term, it is devised in response to the Covid-19 emergency and is intended to provide guidance for the conduct of remote teaching and learning during an extended unforeseen school closure.

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of use of technology for distance or remote teaching and learning during the current Coronavirus stay at home instruction, hereafter referred to as "Distance eLearning" – it operates in addition to our existing Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The policy presented here should be read also in tandem with our school's Code of Behaviour Policy

The primary obligations that all schools have are to the welfare of the learners in their school. This policy, therefore, seeks to ensure that remote learning is safe for all student learner under Child Protection Policy and that their data is also protected under GDPR legislation. Schools must ensure that learning may be able to take place in an environment that is respectful and fair and meets its statutory duties.

This Policy is prepared, therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Education and relevant sections of:

(a) The Education Act (1998)
(b) Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
(c) Equal Status Act (2000)
(d) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
(e) Disability Act (2005)
(f) Children First 2017
(g) GDPR
(h) Department of Education: Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools
(i) NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008).

**Context**
Teaching and Learning is always evolving, especially, as we move deeper into the 21st century. Developments in IT provide us all with great opportunities as learners and teachers. Never before has there been greater scope to learn using technology and it continues to change the learning relationship between teachers and students. Advances in technology mean that assignments can be delivered remotely and that greater access to information on the internet affords the opportunities for real learning to take place under the watchful and professional guidance of the teacher. However, whether a student is being directed remotely or via a traditional classroom environment, it is very important that all partners are aware that once a learning exchange takes place between a student

and teacher, whether at home or school, the same statutory rules apply i.e. the school's Code of Behaviour and all of the school's policies.

This Policy has been developed during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when remote teaching and learning was imposed and may be imposed again on the school community, without prior knowledge and preparation. Monaghan Collegiate School endeavours to make it very clear to all of our partners that the values that are instilled in all of our policies remain, no matter how we change our teaching and learning methodologies or the location of that teaching and learning. This includes remote learning or when a child is being taught in an environment that is not within the school building and the teacher is working remotely and is not present with the student(s).

**Guidelines on the appropriate use of Online Platforms for engaging in remote teaching and learning**

Monaghan Collegiate School encourages all students to use Google Classroom under the G Suite for education platform. All students from first – sixth year have been given account details. If problems arise with Google Classroom students should contact the school office 047-82060, their year head (via email – contact details on the school website, https://www.monaghancollegiateschool.ie/parents/year-heads/ or Mr Lovett (ICT Co-ordinator) via i.lovett@monaghancollegiateschool.ie.  G Suite is a very useful tool for remote teaching and learning.

**Scope of this Policy**

This policy covers any aspect of student distance learning as used by Monaghan Collegiate School Staff.

In all cases students must use their @monaghancollegiateschool.ie account to log in. Students are not to use any other account under any circumstances for the purposes of Distance eLearning.

The list of applications that will be used for distance learning will primarily be:

- G Suite for Education, incorporating:
    - Gmail (e-mail)
    - Google Classroom
    - Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Calendar etc…
    - Google Meet
    - Google Forms
- Google Meet or Zoom – for live online classes.

There may be some additional applications that teachers may use, and the teacher will provide the student with the information required to access them. This must, in all cases, use an @monaghancollegiateschool.ie account as the login.

**eLearning Approach**

eLearning will take what is known as a blended approach and some teachers may use different methods more than another teacher. For example:

- Some teachers may use regular live classes while others may not
- Some teachers may use live classes through Zoom while others may use Google Meet
- Some teachers may distribute work as weekly bulk assignments while others may do so as daily homework-style tasks.

In all cases the primary aim is to cover the required curriculum areas for their specific subject. The teacher will decide the most effective method to use to achieve this aim. Students should get in touch with their teacher right away if they are having difficulty with any aspect of their subject or if they are finding the workload unmanageable.

**Everyone's Responsibilities while partaking in eLearning**

For staff and teachers:

- Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class
- Disruptive students will be removed in order to allow those who wish to partake a fair chance to do so. Repeatedly disruptive students may receive a temporary ban from all online access.
- Teachers will do their utmost to be available at the identified time on their timetable – this may be via a Zoom/Google Meet live video, through Google Classroom or by e-mail.

For students:

- You are to communicate through your @monaghancollegiateschool.ie account only. The use of any other account or e-mail address is expressly prohibited
- Do not engage in communications with any account other than an @monaghancollegiateschool.ie account and report any such activity to your teacher or year-head's @monaghancollegiateschool.ie e-mail account
- You must always be civil and respectful to your teachers and fellow students
- You are not to record or forward any content within a Google Classroom group – such as worksheets, exam papers, answers, solutions, videos, notes or Google Meet/Zoom links – to anyone else without the permission of the creator of that content
- You understand that all your online activity is recorded. This includes anything you send or say via e-mail, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Zoom, and whether you are checking regularly for assigned work.

For parents:

- You should ensure that your son/daughter is checking in regularly for assigned work
- Where live classes are being run you should ensure your son/daughter is in an area of the house that is quiet and free from distractions. Please be mindful of Child Protection Guidelines, for example, bedrooms should not be used for live classes
- Live online classes should be viewed by your son/daughter only.

**Live Online Classes**

Teachers may deliver some of the course "live" using Zoom or Google Meet. This will use varying combinations of audio, video, virtual whiteboards and screencasts.

In the use of Zoom / Google Meet:

- Students must always follow the direction of their teacher just as in the classroom
- Students are not to turn on their microphone unless the teacher invites them to do so. In any case, all microphones should be on mute when a person is not speaking to avoid distracting background noise being broadcast to everyone.
- A Zoom/Google Meet link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive the link. Do not forward any link to anyone else.
- All Zoom/ Google Meet sessions can be recorded by the teacher, and these recordings may be made available by the teacher to the class to watch back again later. This recording includes any video, screenshares, whiteboards and audio from the class.
- Only the teacher is allowed record a session. No-one else is permitted to record.
- Appropriate dress (e.g. not wearing pyjamas). Both teachers and students should wear clothing that would normally be worn in public.
- Students should not take phone calls or use other messaging devices during the lesson.
- Students should not have other browsers or apps open during the online lesson so as to reduce the risk of inappropriate content being displayed.

**What we retain:**

- Login activity, specifically, the last time a student logged in to their G Suite for education account
- In live classes using Zoom or Google Meet, all audio, video, whiteboard, annotations and screen share activity of both teacher and participants (audio/video is not recorded if the student is on mute and the video is not enabled).

**Why we retain it:**

- To assist us in making sure students are engaging in learning sufficiently and in good time
- To assist us in generating appropriate and relevant feedback to parents on progress
- To provide revision materials by means of replying topics covered in a live class, and to ensure those who might be unable to attend live classes can still cover the same content as the rest of the class
- To provide a record of activity in the event of a disciplinary or other issue arising during a live class.

**Where we retain it:**

- All recordings are kept within the school's own systems which requires a valid @monaghancollegiateschool.ie login to access

**Review** This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually at the February Board meeting.

Signed                                                                      Date 08/01/2021
              Chairperson of the Board of Management.